

TSI AN'S PATH OF EXILE

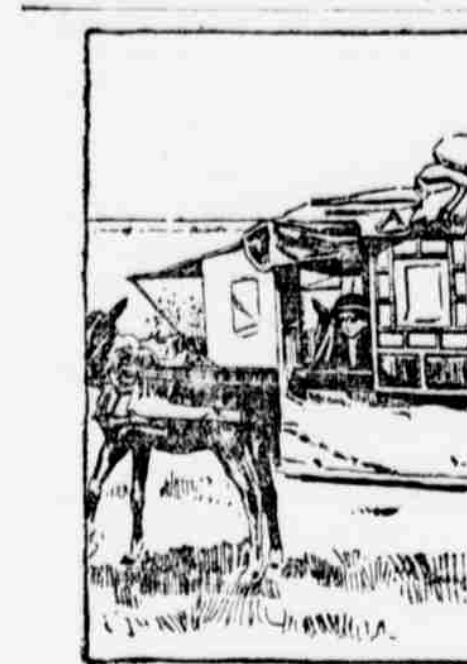
Hard Road She Must Travel to Reach the Ancient Capital.

SCENIC WONDERS OF THE COUNTRY

History, Achievements and Rulers of the Mountain City of Sigan Fu Famous Monument to the Christian Religion.

(Copyright 1900, by I. T. Headland.)
Hsiao, Fu, of Sigan, the ancient capital of China, to which the emperor dowager is said to have fled, is one of the most interesting cities of the middle kingdom. More than three thousand years ago, or about the time of Solomon, this ancient city, under the name of "Perpetual Peace," was the capital city of one of the feudal princes of the Chou dynasty, and from that time to this, under various fortunes, it has been either the first or the second city of the empire.

It is situated more than six hundred miles southwest of Peking, behind a range of mountains. Next to the solid rock, it is impossible for anyone to count correctly the exact number of the lions on the bridge. Those who have counted them have all varied in their estimate and the Chinese in that neighborhood are so superstitious as to be afraid to count them.



MULE LITTER FOR MOUNTAIN ROAD TRAVEL.

dowager, if the "old lady" is not hiding in some of these wonderful waste temples to the mountains, and notice the road as we pass over it.

The old empress, if she followed the custom of the Chinese, would have to leave the city by the "east side gate," the "west side gate" or the "back gate," for it is an understood law that no woman connected with the palace dares to leave the forbidden city through the Chien Men or "front gate." She would then pass down to the southwest over the eastern plain, crossing the "Muddy river" (Hsin), on the great stone bridge which is called "Marco Polo's bridge." This is one of the most remarkable bridges in China. On the top of every upright stone which holds the panels there is a lion carved and the Chinese say that it is impossible for anyone to count correctly the exact number of the lions on the bridge. Those who have counted them have all varied in their estimate and the Chinese in that neighborhood are so superstitious as to be afraid to count them.

The next place of importance as connected with the present trouble to which she would come would be Pao Ting Fu, the capital city of the Chihli province, a city which, if reports be true, must take a unique place in American-Chinese intercourse, as being the scene of the first murder of any American citizen in China by the Chinese.

Roads Specially Prepared.

One cannot but wonder whether, when the old empress left the emperor and the heir-apparent left the city, there would be as much repairing of roads as there is on ordinary occasions when they go for a trip. When they go to visit their ancestral tombs or when the emperor goes out to worship at the Temple of Heaven all the roads over which one travels on ordinary occasions, "bumpy-bumpy" in a springless cart, are leveled down with hoes and rakes and sprinkled with yellow earth, the royal color, brought from outside the city. It is to be feared that the old lady did not have time to start off in style on this occasion.

But this occasion is not her first run. She is becoming accustomed to this kind of thing, having done it before. When her husband was still alive and the English and French armies paid a visit to Peking it occurred to Helen Feng and his wife, with this lady as a companion, that they wanted to pay a visit to Jehol, a place northeast of Peking in the direction of their native land. This present visit of the allied powers gives her an opportunity of seeing the ancient capital of Chous, the Hans and the Tans.

It will be impossible to note all she sees on her way, though the trip at a more favorable season of the year and under more favorable circumstances would be one which any pleasure-seeker or globe-pilgrim might well wish to take. It lies through beautiful valleys and over mountain ranges, through deep gorges, alongside muddy rivers or clear mountain streams, over which, along which or through which no carts can go, litters can scarcely go and even chairs and donkeys or mules go with difficulty. In some places she will pass along a narrow road with a high mountain on one side above her and a deep mountain gorge on the other side below, in which flows a clear stream, bounding over great boulders and falling over precipices, sending up a spray to join that which at the same time may be coming down upon her from the clouds above.

She will pass over mountain ranges

which she must ascend by little winding paths, up which it will be almost impossible for men to carry her, which, when she has ascended, will be so high as to be almost above the region of the ordinary rain, and she will see the valleys rolled full of blue white clouds massed as though they were heaped up with snow. The sun will be shining in all its splendor above her, but it will not be hot, while at the same time it may be thundering and raining in the valleys below.

Wonderful Flower Land.

But she will find other and milder beauties than mountain gorges and roaring streams. She will find that which has given China one of her most attractive names, the "Flower Land." Along these valleys and covering these mountain sides is spread a carpet of flowers, masses of varicolored begonias, hundreds of varieties of purple flowers, which have exchanged pollen with white and pink flowers until the white and pink and the purple are almost lost in the lightest and most delicate shades of lavender. She will find great tracts of roses on these mountains, planted in the first place by the devotees of some of the Buddhist temples of the region, which since that time have grown and died and grown and spread, until the mountain top is a wilderness of roses.

She will see as she passes along these valleys great caves in the mountain sides, carved out of the solid rock, in some of which a huge Buddha has been chiseled in the making of the cave and left sitting in the center, the stone all cut away from

the statue which the pious excavators saw in imagination sitting in the center of the solid mass of granite or sandstone. She will see other caves, the length or depth of which like the great Mammoth cave has never yet been ascertained, and which, like that, was not made by the work of men's hands, but was the result of nature's own convulsions.

She will see advertisements painted on the mountain side similar to our "pain-de-stroying oil" and "sure relief extracts," extolling temples where all kinds of diseases can be cured. Indeed it might be healed and all that is needed is that the sick man or the sufferer make a pilgrimage thither, either with his staff or on his knees, or by measuring his length on the ground at every third step from his home, recited mantras. Indeed it might be that she would pass in her flight thousands of these pilgrims going to or from some of these numerous temples, for there are those who sin and who realize their sin to such an extent as to be unable to turn their minds from it, even in time of Boer trouble and foreign war, and who know of no better method of relieving the tension of their conscience than to cast themselves upon the ground at every third step for hundreds of miles over these rough roads, so that it may be either she or they might think of the proverb:

Mighty Engineering Feats.

Let us suppose that our party has arrived in the neighborhood of Sigan Fu, what now will they find? Some of the most remarkable engineering feats of ancient times. When the founder of the Han dynasty overthrew the son of the builder of the Great Wall he determined to remove his capital from the eastern plain in Honan to the city called "Perpetual Peace," in these desolated mountains. He changed the name of the city to "Western Peace" and after having destroyed the palace of the conqueror he built a palace in this mountain city. The building of the palace, however, was a small matter. He found that roads were needed in order that taxes and tribute as well as visitors and officials might be able to reach his capital and so he began constructing roads and bridges through and over these mountain passes and gorges, which proved to be an undertaking of enormous magnitude. He caused the building of the Great Wall, accomplished only a few years before.

For years he employed not less than 100,000 workmen, who dug away the mountains in the direction of their native land. This present visit of the allied powers gives her an opportunity of seeing the ancient capital of Chous, the Hans and the Tans.

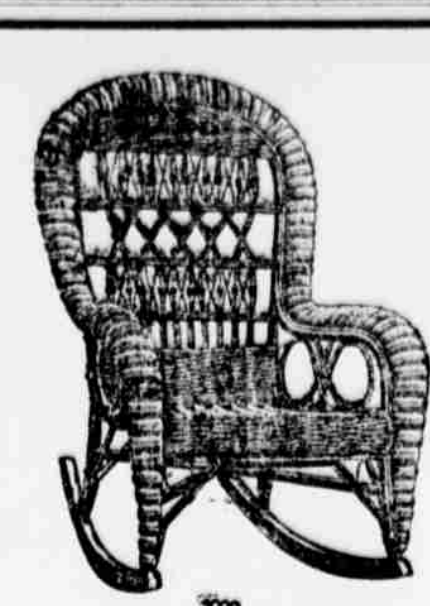
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City Behind the Mountains.

Arrived at her destination, the exiled empress finds a city of more than a million inhabitants—the principal trade center between the east and the west. In it rises a great temple to Lao Tzu, the founder of the Taoist sect—one of the most famous temples in the empire. The city is the capital of the Han Fu, but it is not the city of the Han Fu, but it is the city of the Tans, the dynasty which embodied the greatest poetical literary period of the empire. But there are other memories of a more stable and permanent nature. Here was established the great Han Lin College, an institution which in commerce and travel compared with the French academy, the oldest really living institution of learning in the world today, unless we except the College for the Sons of the Empire in Peking, which was probably established first in the same city.

For the eyes of the empress there will be here a sight calculated to excite her wrath. In this city during the great literary period there was erected in the year 781, A. D., a monument which preserves an inscription in praise of Christianity and the God of Heaven—the great Nestorian monument, from which she will learn that the emperor himself at that early date established and patronized the church, which she at the close of the nineteenth century is trying to blot out of existence. She may be reminded of the fact that here have been found coins twenty-five centuries old and a brick as old as the Great Wall,



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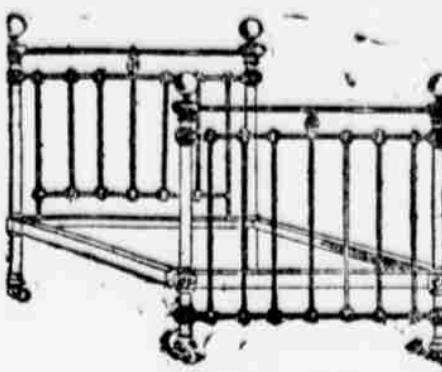
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